

REMARKS

All previously pending claims 1-38 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of new claim 39-52.

Claims 19, 22, 27, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Perkins (USP 4,044,834). Claims 22, 27-29, and 38 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Perkins. Claim 24 was rejected under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Perkins in view of Weaver (USP 6,302,136). Claim 25 was rejected under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Perkins in view of Tartalia (USP 5,078,177). Claim 26 was rejected under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Perkins in view of Walker (USP 3,658,092)

Applicant submits that the pending claims distinguishes over the applied references because none of the applied references would have disclosed maintaining a closure member (e.g., 67) in a closed disposition solely based on the steam pressure from the vessel.

Specifically, independent claim 39 now calls for (1) a valve assembly for enabling release or pressurized steam from the pressure vessel, the valve assembly having a displaceable closure member which, in its closed disposition, is maintained in the closed disposition only by exposure to the pressure of the steam within the pressure vessel, and (2) a double acting actuator for displacing the closure member from the closed disposition to an open disposition against the pressure of the steam within the pressure vessel for the release of steam from the pressure vessel.

In Perkins, the valve is maintained in an equilibrium state by using the steam pressure and the pressure applied by a hydraulic system. See C2:L40-55. In this respect, Perkins does not disclose or teach keeping the valve closed using only the steam pressure from the vessel.

Request for Interview

Applicant requests an interview before the examiner issues a next Office Action. The undersigned will contact the examiner to schedule an interview in due course. The examiner, however, is urged to contact the undersigned if the examiner intends to act on this case before an interview is scheduled.

Applicant submits that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicant urges the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATE

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